

# Biden administration tests “robotic dogs” at US-Mexico border

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The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) posted a “feature article” on its website on February 1 confirming that the Biden administration is testing four-legged, potentially lethal “robotic dogs” at the US-Mexico border.

The lighthearted DHS article concludes by warning readers: “[D]on’t be surprised if in the future we see robot ‘Fido’ out in the field, walking side-by-side with CBP [Customs and Border Protection] personnel.” The agency explains that the four-legged drones would “help boost the presence of Border Patrol in the region.”

The memo does not mention that robotic “Fido” can easily be equipped with automated weapons to be used in a “variety of combat applications,” according to its creators.

The particular version of robotic dog being tested at the border is produced by the Philadelphia-based company Ghost Robotics. Ghost Robotics has produced dog drones with a number of corporate partners, including Verizon, Amazon Web Services and weapons manufacturer SWORD.

The partnership with SWORD made headlines when the manufacturers displayed a heavily armed “robodog” at the Association of the United States Army’s 2021 annual conference last October.

SWORD’s website boasts that the company’s Defense Systems Special Purpose Unmanned Rifle (SPUR) was specifically designed to “offer precision fire from unmanned platforms such as the Ghost Robotics Vision-60 quadruped”—the robot currently being tested at the border.

The SWORD website states that SPUR is “the future of unmanned weapon systems, and that future is now.”

It is necessary to state clearly: If not stopped, such technology will one day be distributed to local police to

use against the working class.

Twitter users were outraged when a Ghost Robotics Twitter post showcased one of the heavily armed “robodogs” under the hashtags #NationalSecurity #drone #robotics, and tagged the US Southern Command.

Fluffyfur3030 commented: “So you’ve done some fancy stepping to avoid saying the quiet part out loud. Let me do it for you. We created a soulless piece of hardware for brutal population suppression when the billionaires finally fear for their ill-gotten gains.” The comment received 1600 “likes.”

Another tweeted: “So, how many civilians per second this designed to kill? Because let’s face it, this will be rolled out on US citizens sooner than it’ll be used for legitimate warfare.”

Already, similar “robot dogs” have been tested to “assist” police in different circumstances in cities across the U.S. In Honolulu, the police department acquired a \$150,000 robot dog, purchased with COVID relief money, to harass and take the temperature of homeless people. In New York City, the police department tested a robot dog during various police calls last spring. Such was the backlash from workers in both cities that the departments had to terminate the contracts.

The preparation of robotic attack dogs to patrol the border is only the latest attack by the Democratic Biden administration on immigrants and asylum seekers. Despite campaigning on the basis of opposition to Trump’s ruthless and inhumane immigration policies, since coming to office Biden has not diverged from his predecessor’s anti-immigrant agenda in any significant way.

In fact, Biden has revived and expanded a legal process known as the “Rocket Docket,” which

expedites the deportation process by giving asylum-seeking families less than a year to defend their right to stay in the U.S.

Asylum cases can take years to resolve, even with the most expert and expensive lawyers. The accelerated timeline is designed to reject as many asylum seekers as possible.

The Biden administration has also continued to use Title 42, a little-known provision of U.S. health law exploited by former President Trump to expel people seeking asylum on the grounds that they pose a public health risk. Following Trump's example, Biden's secretary of homeland security, Alejandro Mayorkas, is cynically using the pandemic to implement a right-wing immigration policy that violates both international and US law. Biden went so far as to defend the use of Title 42 in court in August.

The use of Title 42, under conditions where the Biden administration is moving aggressively to scrap all remaining public health measures that slow the spread of COVID-19, is particularly sinister and hypocritical.

According to official CBP statistics, the overwhelming majority of the nearly 1.5 million people expelled via Title 42 since March 2020, when Trump invoked the provision, have been expelled during President Biden's tenure.

Biden briefly came under attack for his use of Title 42 in September, after video footage and photographic images of US Border Patrol agents herding Haitian migrants as though they were cattle triggered widespread revulsion across the United States and internationally. In the end, the administration expelled nearly 4,000 people to Haiti in only nine days.

Many of these individuals had not lived in Haiti for years, some for over a decade. Most of the children were born or grew up in South America and are more fluent in Spanish or Portuguese than in Haitian Creole or French.

For all its proclaimed differences with Trump, touted during election campaigns, the Democratic Party has done everything in its power to maintain the Trump-era immigration policies, further militarizing the border and persecuting migrants and asylum seekers. Biden is following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Barack Obama. The Obama-Biden administration oversaw more deportations than any before it, earning Obama

the sobriquet "deporter-in-chief."

This latest attack on immigrants from the Biden administration once again demonstrates that there is no constituency in the ruling class for the defense of democratic rights. Only the working class can defend immigrants from the dictatorial policies of the ruling class, Democratic and Republican alike.

All workers, regardless of immigration status, are the ultimate target of the anti-democratic methods used against immigrants. All of the instruments of war used against immigrants will be turned against workers protesting against the homicidal profits-before-human life COVID policies of both capitalist parties, as well as rampant price rises, cuts in real wages and ever-widening social inequality.

Concentration camps for "illegal" immigrants will be utilized to detain workers engaged in "illegal" strikes and protests.

The entire working class in the US and internationally must link its demands on wages, benefits and social equality with the defense of immigrant workers, who must be guaranteed the right to live and work in whatever country they choose, with full legal rights.



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